

## St Mary's CE Primary School Lockdown Policy April 2018

Parents and Carers trust our school to keep their children safe. Thanks to the efforts of staff and governors, schools in the UK normally remain a safe haven for children; but as tragic events both overseas and at home have shown, they can become involved in an emergency at any time.

The Department for Education recommends that schools create and maintain an emergency plan and as an outstanding school we not only comply with this, but also want to go one step further and be ready to deal with the sort of emergencies that no one really wants to think about – the situation where the children and staff are endangered by the threat of deliberate harm. In emergency planning terms this is called lockdown, a description that will be used throughout this document.

The document is designed to help us:

- Develop and review a lockdown plan,
- Provide information to all staff who could become involved in an incident,
- Help staff to educate and inform the pupils and indeed their parents about what to do in such a situation,
- Detail actions and procedures not only for use during such an incident but also for testing our readiness for such an incident.

The advice from the Department for Education and the Cabinet Office reminds us “planning for emergencies can save lives. It can prevent an incident getting worse, provide confidence to staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils and enhance your school’s reputation as a safe place to learn and work. Plans which deal with the consequences of large-scale emergencies also help staff to deal with the smaller (but nevertheless potentially distressing) incidents that schools can experience on a regular basis”.

This is a document that every good school needs, every member of staff needs to understand, and no one ever wants to use.

### **What is lockdown?**

The purpose of a lockdown is to prevent an intruder or other threat outside the school from causing harm to pupils and staff. It means that the entrances to the school must be secured in an effort to prevent any threat entering, and staff and pupils must find a suitable place to protect themselves.

In the case of a fire or similar emergency the children and staff are taught how to leave the building quietly and safely. In a lockdown, they need to learn almost the opposite, to actually get inside the building as quickly and safely as possible and to stay there until the threat is removed, or in extreme circumstances, to leave if an intruder gains entrance to the building. A distinct policy is needed because it is so different from the standard

emergency drills, and is so extreme in nature that everyone needs to be thoroughly well versed in its contents and the role they are to play during such an incident.

Lockdown arrangements depend heavily on the size and layout of the school, and as a small school, with a church building separated from the main building, and relatively open fields to the rear we have a number of challenges to overcome.

Any procedures we establish must be realistic; in an incident staff and pupils will not have much time to seek an appropriate place to hide.

It is very unlikely that our school will ever need to implement a real lockdown but it is important for us to have arrangements in place to deal with such a situation.

There are a number of stages we need to go through to create a robust lockdown procedure.

1. Understand what lockdown is and why it could happen (this is covered by this document)
2. Address the issues raised by our particular school circumstances (many of these are touched on in this document for the input and ideas of teaching and support staff)
3. Compile the completed procedure for distribution to all staff complete with step by step instructions for display in classrooms and other school areas as appropriate
4. Hold practice drills on a suitable basis (e.g. annually)
5. Ensure the policy is regularly reviewed and included in the induction for new staff members

### Some of the issues we need to consider

#### A) Safe places

It is important for all staff to decide and know at this planning stage:

1. Where are the optimum safe places in the school and church?

The characteristics of an ideal safe place are:

- a. Ability to lock pupils and staff inside
  - b. No windows or windows with blinds
  - c. An ability to communicate with the outside world eg mobile phone, staff shared drive.
  - d. A way out if someone comes in.
2. What the second choices if those are not available?

#### B) Suitable signal for a lockdown

The signal for a lockdown should be clearly distinguishable to that of an evacuation (fire drill). Any confusion may result in pupils and staff congregating at an assembly point, thus potentially making them more vulnerable to an intruder or outside threat. We will use an air-horn for the signal. Air-horns will be kept in the music cupboard and first aid cupboard in the main office.

### **C) Communication during the incident**

During a lockdown staff may find it difficult to obtain a clear overview of the situation. Mobile phones can be used to contact the office and other members of staff. Mobile phones must not be used to contact family and friends. Staff can communicate through the Lockdown folder in the shared drive.

### **D) Who gives the signal?**

Potentially any member of staff could be the first to raise an alarm for a lockdown so it is important that all employees are aware of the plan and instructions are available in every room. The most senior member of staff or secretary will contact emergency services using 999 in an emergency or 101 if less serious.

#### Once the signal is initiated who does what?

Head --- Check the hall and toilets are clear of children. Lock the front and side door with the bolt. Attempt to return to head's office. Lock the door. Inform emergency services. Monitor shared drive.

Teachers --- Detain students in the classroom, keep pupils calm and keep them secure by locking windows and doors. The key is to be kept in the door and blinds lowered. Keep an attendance log of all students in the room and update when safe to do so. All classes have class lists displayed. Notify the office by mobile phone/email of any missing or additional children in their room.

Support staff – direct pupils. Assist teachers inside the classrooms.

All staff - Do not allow anyone in or out until given the all clear by an appropriate authority. The secretary will communicate with teachers using the Teacher2Parents closed staff group.

### **E) Dealing with the concerns of the children**

It is important that pupils know what action to take if a lockdown happens at school.

Becoming familiar with lockdown drills will improve the likelihood of these procedures being implemented swiftly and effectively.

An assembly will be dedicated to explaining an emergency drill and outline the actions pupils would be required to take; this will then be followed up by an exercise of the drill.

### **F) Practice drills**

There are various ways of holding practice sessions for a lockdown and they range in detail and therefore the amount of planning and work they will involve.

The purpose of an exercise is to validate procedures documented within the Lockdown Plan. They are also particularly adept at highlighting areas of the response that may initially have been overlooked when developing the plan. There will always be a debriefing after the drill or event. Parents will be informed before the practice has taken place.

## The lockdown policy

### Reasons for a lockdown to be initiated:

- Someone who is out of control and threaten the safety of our pupils, staff, or himself/herself;
- Someone who has a gun or weapon;
- An intruder on the site with the potential to pose a risk to school;
- Hazardous chemicals outside the building;
- An extreme weather related event;
- A major fire in the vicinity of the school;
- An incident of civil disturbance in the local community which poses a risk to school;
- Local risk of air pollution, such as a smoke plume or gas cloud;

When an incident occurs the priority is to safeguard those on-site (i.e. pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors) and alert the emergency services if necessary. Other organisations, such as the local authority, can then be informed as appropriate. (Carol Gill, Emergency Planning Department 0161 253 5932).

### Raising the alarm

All staff (especially those working in the main office) should be trained that when information is received in the office of a situation requiring a lockdown, whoever receives that information, will immediately activate the school's lockdown system. There should be no hesitation in announcing the lockdown, using the air-horn and the decision to call the lockdown should be made immediately by whoever receives the call to the office, and should not be delayed.

It should be presumed that we are having a full lockdown. A senior member of staff will inform staff if it is a partial lockdown. During partial lockdown pupil and staff can move freely within the school but all external doors and windows will be locked. Partial lockdown will be appropriate for less serious incidents e.g. a stray dog/animal within the grounds.

### Classrooms and other secure areas

Before locking a door, staff should gather everyone in the immediate vicinity into their classroom or other secure area, if it is safe to do so.

Once inside a secure area, staff and students should;

- Stay away from doors and windows; turn off lights; close blinds; cover glass in door
- Beware of sight lines if there is a window in the classroom door,
- Consider covering window;
- Take cover if available (get behind something solid);
- Remain absolutely quiet
- Teachers to take attendance register;
- No mobile phone use unless necessary to communicate regarding the incident.
- Mobile phones should be put on vibrate.

### Toilets:

As the door into the toilet area cannot be locked children need to evacuate toilets if at all possible and get to an area that can safely be locked down.

Designated adults who work in close proximity to toilets need to check them before locking down themselves, if it safe to do so, and take any students found in the toilet area, into their classrooms to lockdown.

As a last resort, staff or children trapped in a toilet, should attempt to somehow secure the bathroom door, enter a cubicle, lock the door and climb on top of the toilet.

### Front Door

The front door will only be opened to emergency services after the CCTV monitor has been checked and a conversation has taken place via the intercom. The inner door will be closed. During lockdown the additional bolts will be engaged on the external doors.

### Terminating a lockdown

Plans to conclude a lockdown will vary. It may be a room to room visit from police/school personnel so that the occupants of a locked room know in fact that who ever is giving them the all-clear, is in fact authentic. In all cases where police have responded, the decision to end a lockdown can only be made after approval of the on-scene police.

### School recovery following a lockdown

A debriefing should occur in all situations following a lockdown. The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included in the debriefing.

In all cases, communication with parents is vital.

## Instructions for lockdown

To initiate a lockdown sound the air-horn

If you hear the lockdown signal:

- Lock your door.
- Place children against the wall, so any intruder looking in cannot see them. If the threat is a chemical or toxic release everyone should cover their nose and mouth (their own clothing can be used)
- Turn out lights and computer monitors.
- Keep children as quiet as possible.
- If children are outside guide them to the nearest designated safe place. If that is not possible they need to disperse, drop and cover.
- Anyone in the hallway should move to the closest classroom immediately.
- Support staff should move to the nearest designated safe place, if possible, or stay in the area they are in, secure the doors, and turn out the lights.
- Stay in safe areas until directed by the emergency services or members of staff to move or evacuate. Never open doors during a lockdown, even in the event of a fire alarm.
- If an evacuation occurs, everyone will be directed by the emergency services to a safe location. Once evacuated teachers should take roll to account for all children present in class.
- Put your mobile on vibrate.
- Take the register and inform the office of unaccounted for children and adults.
- If in church, stay in church with the doors locked. Use walkie talkie as **necessary**.